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Little chief gives ball big push

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MISSOULA--

He may be the smallest and first beardless, but Jerry Okonski packs a lot of push as the Chief Push of the 51st Foresters' Ball at the University of Montana.

Standing 5'8" and tipping the scales at 145, Jerry has had to have a lot of push to organize the 5,500 man hours, 3,500 trees and 2,500 slabs that go into the physical make-up of the ball.

It's good leadership training and Jerry says he'd do it all over again, providing he wasn't carrying 19 credits of course work. He was financial chairman for the 50th anniversary ball. He said the $6,000 operation was able to turn $1,500 over to the forestry loan and scholarship committee after meeting the ball expenses.

The wood utilization major who hails from Chicago, Ill., anticipates less return from this year's ball, because the attendance is becoming more restrictive. After 50 years of doing it one way, the 51st ball is an experiment.

"We're having a queen selection for the first time, and there is a new emphasis on costumes and beards. The less desirable aspects of the ball, which were evident last year, will be controlled."

The foresters have been going to the woods since school started in September. The Anaconda Company permitted the foresters to cut the trees from land just above Bonner Dam. They were fireproofed Saturday to adhere to fire marshall regulations.

Actual construction of the ball begins Wednesday in the Adams Field House and the ball is scheduled for Friday and Saturday evenings.

Jerry and students who need loans are not the only beneficiaries of the ball, however. The whole campus turns out for the whoop-up time--from the log slide ride to get into the ball to the dance introductions by chain saws--it's a collegiate twosome ball, Forester's Style.